

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

ICARIA. A Chapter in the History of Communism. By ALBERT SHAW, Ph. D. 16mo. pp. ix, 219. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The colony of Icaria, founded in Texas by Etienne Cabot, and still surviving in branches transplanted to Iowa and California, seems to Mr. Shaw deserving of especial consideration, partly because it has survived so long, and partly because, being free from the quasi-religious impulse which has governed most of the communistic experiments in the United States, it presents a pure example of the "rational democratic communism" by which social philosophers have sought to regenerate the world on strictly secular principles.

Although the Icarian experiment has lasted more than a generation it certainly cannot be called in any sense successful. The communities have attained a certain moderate material prosperity; that is, they have just lived; but they have never contrived to eliminate human nature from the conditions with which they have had to deal, and as a consequence they have always been the prey of internal dissensions. It is instructive to remark that after reconstructing society on philosophical principles the colonists have invariably developed the same selfish and unphilosophical abuses against which they have made war, and have been obliged to appeal to the ungenerous political courts and legislatures for protection from injustice and tyranny in their own household. Cabot manifested an intolerable ambition, and his autocratic claims involved him in bitter quarrels with his own disciples. The Icarians in Iowa went to law with one another; and it is a curious circumstance that the disagreement which resulted in their dismemberment began with the gradual setting up by the older members of a claim to private property in their garden plots, and an attempt by the younger and more radical communists to confiscate the grapes which were raised on these little patches. Thus after abolishing private property in land, the communists seem to have gone to work to re-establish it on the old historical lines.

In the later ramifications of the sect it has been found necessary to make a distinct recognition of private property, not only in certain personal necessities but in the surplus product of labor—a concession which, of course, surrenders the whole principle of socialism. The disciples have become divided into Conservatives and Radicals, those who wish to enjoy their earnings in peace, and those who wish to devote themselves to a general socialistic propaganda; and, in a word, socialism manifests itself in the experience of the Icarians only as an attempt to turn society back to its starting-point, in order that it may go through precisely the same course of progress which it has traversed already.

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